THE CHURCH AT MARKET SQUARE

DOTTERER

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The Church at Market Square.

Read at a meeting in the Chapel of Market Square Presbyterian Church, Germantown, Philadelphia, on Thursday Evening, November 17, 1898,

BY HENRY S. DOTTERER.

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THE CHURCH AT MARKET SQUARE.

Religious considerations held a large place in the plans of William Penn for the colonization of Pennsylvania. This is well known. Francis Daniel Pastorius, the founder of Germantown, was actuated by ideals equally lofty. Pathfinder, colonizer, lawgiver, magistrate, scholar, philosopher—all these Pastorius was. His genius established here a municipality upon a foundation, wise, practical, just, adequate which has yielded its citizens an unbroken prosperity of more than two centuries. But he was more. He was a Christian—pre-eminently a Christian. He loved his God and his neighbor. In his letters to his co-partners of the Frankfort Company and to his parents, his purpose of benefiting his fellow-man and glorifying his God is ever kept in view. In the letter to his parents of March 7, 1684, after speaking of his work, his aims and his hopes for Germantown, he says : Betrachtet nun, liebwertheste Eltern, ob ich auff diese Weiss Gott und meinem Neben-Menschen nicht weiterepriesslichere Dienste leisten möge—Consider now, parents most worthy of love, whether in this way I can not render praiseworthy service to God and my fellow-creatures. His religion was broad. He welcomed godly men of every faith. Under his liberal rule several denominations established themselves soon after the founding of the town. From that day to this, Germantown has been noted for the religious bearing of its people and the number and prosperity of its churches.

Of the Churches which then took root here, one is now extinct. It is the Reformed Church. Concerning this once prominent but now almost forgotten factor in Germantown's religious history, it is my purpose to speak. And I will ask your patient attention to some facts that I have grouped—some of them, familiar to you ; others, discovered by me in the course of a three-months' rummage in the archives of the Reformed Church of the Netherlands, (Hollands) where they had been buried for a century and a half and longer. These facts deal with the beginnings of the Reformed congregation having its house of worship on Market Square, the vicissitudes attending the infant church, an allusion to its subsequent prosperity, and a reference to its transformations later into a full-fledged Presbyterian church.

ORIGIN OF THE REFORMED CHURCH.

The Reformed Church, let me premise, had its origin in the great uprising in the Sixteenth century against the Romish hierarchy. Ulric Zwingli, Swiss Reformer and patriot, at Zurich ; John Calvin, French

Protestant, at Geneva ; Guillaume Farel, Reformer at Neuchatel ; Admiral de Coligny, leader of the Huguenots ; William the Silent, Prince of Orange, founder of the Dutch Republic ; Frederick the Pious, Elector of the Palatinate—names that shine with fixed and lustrious light in history—are a few of the heroes and martyrs of that Protestantism which became the Reformed Church of Germany, Switzerland, Holland and France.

THE REFORMED CHURCH IN AMERICA.

This historic Church was brought to America by the Hollanders who settled Manhattan island in 1623. Forty-four years before Penn established his government on these shores, a Reformed Churchman, Peter Minuit, inaugurated a colonial enterprise on the banks of the Delaware river. He was the first governor of New Amsterdam (now New York). Afterwards he entered the service of the Government of Sweden, which sent him to found a colony on the South or Delaware river, which he did in 1638. This Swedish settlement, and others made subsequently, Penn found here upon his arrival. Peter Minuit was born in the city of Wesel on the Rhine, and was an officer in the Reformed Church there.

There are traces of immigrants of the Reformed denomination in this locality prior to the coming of Penn. There is a tradition among the members of the widely-dispersed Reiff family, that John George Reiff, their ancestor, came to Pennsylvania before Penn set up his government. Jacob Reiff, a son of John Reiff, was prominent in the establishment of the Reformed church in Skippack in 1727, and had important relations with the Skippack and Philadelphia congregations afterwards. He occupied responsible public office under the provincial government.

THE BEHAGELS.

Reformed Churchmen became interested at its inception in the scheme which led to the settlement of Germantown. Among the original associates of the Frankfort Company was Daniel Behagel, who was of Huguenot or Walloon stock. In 1562, Jacob Behagel, his grandfather, a victim of the persecutions of the Reformed, fled from the neighborhood of Lille, taking refuge in the vicinity of Frankfort on the Main. Daniel Behagel was born November 18, 1625, in Hanau, Germany, and married, May 20, 1654, at Mühlheim near Cologne, Magdalena von Mastricht. Jacob von der Wallen, another original purchaser, was a brother-in-law of Daniel Behagel. In 1655, Jacob von der Wallen, from Rotterdam, and Johanna Behagel, a step-sister to Daniel Behagel, were married. In 1661, Daniel Behagel and Jacob von der Wallen applied to the councils of Frankfort on the Main and of Hanau, for permission to establish the manufacture of faience, and four days later Hanau granted their request. Their productions found high favor. To this day, the name Behagel is identified with

the porcelain business in Frankfort. Von Mastricht was the surname of Daniel Behagel's wife, and Dr. Gerhard von Mastricht was another partner of the Frankfort Company. In 1730 and later Isaac and Carl Behagel, merchants and bankers of Frankfort, were designated to receive moneys contributed in Germany and Holland for the use of the needy Reformed churches in Pennsylvania. An estimate of the high standing of this family may be formed from the record of its acknowledged loyalty and services to the reigning sovereigns. In 1697, Isaac Behagel was decorated with a gold medal and gold chain, by William the Third, King of Great Britain, and their High Mightinesses the Stadtholders of the United Netherlands, for services rendered in the war from 1688 to 1697 ; and February 26, 1706, he was similarly honored by Frederick I., King of Prussia, with two gold medals—one commemorating the capture of Gueldres (Gelders) from the Dutch in 1702, the other for services rendered in 1705 in connection with the obsequies of Sophia Charlotte, Queen of Prussia, sister of George I., of England, a lady noted for her literary and philosophical tastes.

ISAAC DILBECK.

Isaac Dilbeck, who came in the same ship with Pastorius, and who was one of the original dwellers in Germantown, was of the Reformed faith. He was in the employ of the Frankfort Company. The ship America, in which he came, it will be remembered, reached Philadelphia before that which brought the Crefeld immigrants, who were the main body of original settlers of Germantown. It sailed from Deal, England, on the 10th of June, 1683, and was ten weeks in making the passage. On the 16th of August, 1683, its passengers first descried America, on the 18th they arrived in Delaware bay, and at twilight on the evening of the 20th, they reached the town of Philadelphia. Pastorius, in his letter to his parents dated March 7, 1684, which I found in Switzerland and which I have not met with on this side of the Atlantic, says : "Isaac Dilbeck, who apparently was the strongest in the company, was down (with sea-sickness) the longest." And in another part of the same letter he says : "Isaac Dilbeck has been somewhat indisposed the past eight days." Dilbeck was a weaver. He soon became a landowner in Germantown. On the 27th of Third month (May), 1686, Francis Daniel Pastorius, as attorney and partner of the Frankfort Company, in fulfillment of the contract between Dilbeck and the Company, conveyed to Isaac Dilbeck, twenty-five acres of land in Germantown—twenty-acres within the inhabited part of the town and five acres in the side land (including a half town-lot), both bounded southeasterly by lands of Paul Kastner and northwesterly by lands of Francis Daniel Pastorius, the twenty acres having a breadth of 7 perches 2 feet, the five acres a breadth of 3 perches 12 feet. It was subject to a yearly rent of a piece of eight or one Reichsthaler, payable, on first day of First month (March) of each year, to the Frank-

fort Company. There was another condition attached which is notable for its moderateness : "In addition, Isaac Dilbeck promises for himself, and his posterity who may be inclined to work by the day, to work for our Frankfort Company in preference to all others for the same wages that they can earn from anyone else." ["Anbey verspricht Isaac Dilbeck vor sich und sein posterität dass wofern dieselbe geneigt seyen würde umb taglohn zu arbeiten, sie vor allen anderen unserer Frankfurt Cie wercken wollen vor dergleichen lohn welchen sie by jemand anders verdienen könnten."]

Isaac Dilbeck's half lot was on the east side of Germantown road. In a list made April 4, 1687, it was numbered 15, his neighbors being Cornelius Bom, No. 14. and Enneke Klosterman, No. 16. The lot out of which Market Square was afterwards taken was No. 10. Isaac Dilbeck participated in the initial labors of planting the new town. He took kindly to the new life in these primitive wilds. He was a model colonist. His wife was Mary Blomerse. They were married in Europe, and they brought with them to this land their two sons, Abraham and Jacob. On the 7th of Third month, 1691, he was naturalized. On the first day of the Fifth month, 1696, Isaac Dilbeck, with the consent of Maria, his wife, sold the 25 acres of land to Daniel Geisler, for £12 14s. current silver money of Pennsylvania, subject to the original quit rent. Evidently he preferred the activities of a large farm. On the 8th of February, 1700, he purchased of George Keith five hundred acres of land in the adjacent township of Whitemarsh, on the Plymouth road. On the 28th of September, 1709, Isaac Dilbeck and Jacob Dilbeck, whom we take to have been the pioneer's sons, were naturalized by act of the Assembly of Pennsylvania. In the year 1710, Isaac Dilbeck and his wife, Mary Blomerse, were members of the Whitemarsh Reformed congregation, organized by Paulus Van Vlecq, the Dutch minister at Neshaminy. He was the junior elder. In 1728 he was an officer of the German Reformed congregation at Whitemarsh under the pastoral care of John Philip Bœhm.

In this connection it may be of interest to read a few more paragraphs from the above-quoted letter of Pastorius to his parents. It is written in the familiar terms of a dutiful son in a "far country." It is dated from Philadelphia, although Germantown had been previously laid out by Pastorius and settled by the pioneer colonists. Speaking of the ocean trip, he says : "The religious beliefs of the passengers, and their vocations, were so varied that the ship might be compared to Noah's ark. * * * I brought with me four men servants, two women servants, two children and one apprentice. Among these were adherents of the Romish, the Lutheran, the Calvanistic (Reformed), the Anabaptist, and the English Churches, and only one Quaker. * * * Laborers and farmers are needed most, and I heartily wish for a dozen sturdy Tyrolese to fell the mighty oaks, for whichever way one turns it is : *Itur in antiquam sylvam*, everything is forest." * * * He speaks of the fruits and nuts found in the

forests, and continues: "On the 16th of October I found pretty March violets in the woods. Also, after I had laid out the town of Germantown on the 24th of October, and when returning the day following, the 25th, with seven others to this place, (Philadelphia) we saw on the way, clinging to a tree a wild grape vine upon which hung about four hundred bunches of grapes. To get the grapes we cut down the tree, and the eight of us ate as many as satisfied us, after which each of us brought a hat full home with us. * * * Two leagues from here lies our Germantown, where already dwell forty-two persons in twelve families, who are mostly linen weavers, unaccustomed to husbandry. * * * The path to Germantown has by frequent going to and fro been so thoroughly beaten that a road has been formed." This sentence seems to explain the cause of the eccentric lines of our Germantown Road : the plain first citizens of Pastorius's budding Germanopolis attending to their simple errands in the neighboring city, were the unconscious engineers of the historic highway.

WILLIAM DEWEES.

Another Reformed Churchman prominently identified with early Germantown was William Dewees. He came from Leeuwarden, province of Friesland, in Holland, about the year 1689, landing at New York with others of his family. He was then about thirteen. His sister, Wilhelmina Dewees, and Nicholas Rittenhouse were married by the pastor of the Dutch Reformed church of New Amsterdam, or New York, on the 29th of May, 1689. Nicholas Rittenhouse prior to this had located at South river (as the Dutch called the Delaware river country), and soon after the marriage the Deweeses came over from New York to Germantown. William Dewees learned the trade of paper maker, doubtless from the Rittenhouses who were the pioneers in the manufacture of paper in America. His wife was Anna Christina Meels. March 1, 1690, Gerrit Hendricks DeWees bought a full lot of land fronting on the Main street in the inhabited part of Germantown, containing thirty-eight acres, and adjacent land towards Plymouth, containing twelve acres. April 18, 1701, Zyntien DeWees, his widow, sold half of this lot and adjacent land to John Conrad Codweis, who sold it February 10, 1703, to William DeWees, who held it until 22d of 11th month, (January) 1706, when he conveyed it to Conrad Rutters. In these transactions he is styled a husbandman. December 23, 1701, the attorney of the widow of Gerrit Hendricks DeWees sold the remaining half of the purchase made by her husband, to John Henry Mehls. Whether Gerret Hendricks DeWees and Zyntien his wife were the parents of William DeWees has not been definitely ascertained; the archives at Leeuwarden may be required to determine this point. In 1708 William Dewees bought land in Bebber's (afterwards Skippack) township, but he did not live upon it. In 1710, he erected the second paper mill in America, on the west side of the Wissahickon, in that part of Germantown called Crefeld. He built one or more grist mills, and

owned and sold lands, mills and dwellings in Crefeld prior to 1725. William Dewees, as also his wife, was a member of the Whitemarsh Reformed congregation, organized by Paulus VanVlecq in 1710, and he was chosen senior deacon at the same time. They brought their children to the dominie for baptism.

It is recorded that some of the pious colonists of early Germantown scrupled at the assumption of public office, and paid penalties for non-performance of such service in preference to doing violence to the dictates of their consciences. William Dewees was a man of a different stamp. In his veins flowed the blood of that people who suffered the tortures of the inquisition and who made indescribable sacrifices for the Reformed religion which the arms of proud Spain, then powerful now humiliated, sought to wrest from them. There were no battles to fight in peaceful Germantown; the mild government of Penn, administered in brotherly kindness by Pastorius, precluded that. But Dewees readily answered every call to public duties. Note some of the contracts and positions taken by him :

December 3, 1703, the Council of Germantown resolved that as speedily as possible a prison (Gefangenhaus) be built, and an agreement was made with William de Wees to cut 600 feet of lumber for this purpose at eleven shillings per hundred. December 31, 1703, it was resolved, further, that, beside the prison, stocks and a cattle pound should be erected. William de Wees undertook to put up the pound, under minute stipulations as to number and quality of posts and rails, their length and form. On sixth of 11th month (January) 1703–4, it was resolved that the prison, stocks, and pound be built in the market place. October 14, 1704, William de Wees was chosen Sheriff. December 1, 1704, the duties of court crier and court messenger were added to that of the shrievalty. 20th of 12th mo. (February) he was appointed fence inspector of his district. November 23, 1705, a committee was directed to audit his accounts, which were evidently found correct, for on December 18, following, he was re-appointed sheriff and fence inspector. On the 23rd of 5th month (April) the Court required him to furnish a bond for the faithful performance of the duties of the office of Sheriff; and he was directed to call in all taxes in arrears before the next session of the Court, and to sue those who would not pay. December 4, 1706, he was chosen one of the Council (composed of six men) of Germantown. Here you have the record of a faithful public official.

For twenty years, from 1725 until his death, the Whitemarsh Reformed congregation, John Philip Bœhm, pastor, used the house of William Dewees for its place of worship. He was an officer in the church all these years. The house used by this congregation, at least the latter part of the time, stands opposite St. Joseph's convent, close to the Wissahickon, at the farther end of the Germantown and Perkiomen turnpike

bridge over the stream. William Dewees died March 3, 1745. His body rests in the Upper (or Axe) burying-ground.

Cornelius Dewees and Garret Dewees, relatives (possibly brothers) of William Dewees, and men of similar character, also located at or near Germantown. Cornelius Dewees and Margaret Koster, his wife, brought their son John Dewees for baptism to Dominie Van Vlecq at Skippack on the 29th of May, 1710. Cornelius Dewees performed various public services at Germantown. November 23, 1704, he was chosen constable for the period of one year, or until a successor should be appointed; and on December 1, 1705, he was appointed, in addition to the constableship, to the office of court crier and messenger of the council.

James de la Plaine came to Germantown from New York about the year 1692. The de la Plaines were French Reformed people, otherwise called Huguenots.

Evert Ten Heuven (otherwise In den Hoff, Im Hoff, now Dehaven) came in 1698 from Mühlheim on the Ruhr, bringing his family. He was of the Reformed Church, and was ordained senior elder of the Whitemarsh Reformed congregation on the 4th of June, 1710, the day of its organization. His wife was Elizabeth Schipbouwer. The Dehavens afterwards located on the Skippack.

Hendrick Pannebecker lived in Germantown at least as early as 1699. He left Germantown in 1702 and settled at Skippack. His wife was Eva Umstead. On the 29th of May, 1710, they brought their three children, Adolph, Martha, and Peter, to Pastor Van Vlecq for baptism. Hendrick Pannebecker was the ancestor of our learned friend, Judge Pennypacker. He was a surveyor, and in that capacity much in the service of the Pennsylvania Provincial government. He was a large landholder. He rendered invaluable assistance to the immigrant colonists in securing for them lands adapted to their particular wants, in suitable localities. Thus he was a benefactor to that great influx of eager emigrants from the Continent of Europe—from Holland, Germany, Switzerland and France—who carried irresistibly forward the work of subduing the forests, clearing the land, cultivating the soil, and evolving the prosperity of the Province.

Hans Hendrick Meels (John Henry Mehls) on the 23rd of December, 1701, bought a half lot on the main street in the inhabited part of Germantown, containing nineteen acres and six acres of side land, from the widow Zyntien Dewees, whose husband, Gerrit Hendricks Dewees, had purchased the whole lot on the first of March, 1690. He was Reformed. In June, 1701, John Henry Mehls was chosen Recorder of Germantown.

John Revenstock came in 1702. He anciently owned Lot No. 2, containing two hundred acres, in the Sommerhausen division of Germantown. He was a member of Pastor Van Vlecq's Whitemarsh Reformed congregation in the year 1711. In July, 1728, he was an officer of John

Philip Bœhm's Whitemarsh congregation, which worshipped at the house of William Dewees, on the Wissahickon.

REV. SAMUEL GULDIN.

In the year 1710 a strong character was added to Germantown's Reformed contingent. That year Samuel Guldin, a minister of the Reformed Church of Switzerland, came to Pennsylvania. He was born in the city of Berne. He first preached in the neighborhood of Berne, but his reputation as a forcible pulpit speaker led to his election as associate pastor of the minister of Berne, and subsequently he became the minister of the three chief churches of the city. His fervid presentation of Christian truth gave offence to his ecclesiastical superiors. He was accused of Pietism, and in 1699 declared guilty of the charge. He was then relegated to the pastorate of an inferior and obscure congregation outside of Berne. On the 16th of January, 1710 (probably $17\frac{10}{11}$), then a resident of Roxborough township, he bought 275 acres of land located along Wissahickon creek. Residing so near Germantown, and sometimes in the the town. he became intimately acquainted with his Reformed brethren here, and as would be expected he preached to them occasionally. After his coming to Pennsylvania he issued three pamphlets. The first of these, dated 1718, entitled Kurtze Apologie, is a self-vindication of his course at Berne; the second, also in 1718, is a short Guide with Contrasts for the explanation and defence of Divine Truth; the third, in 1743, was an argument in opposition to the coalescence of the several religious denominations as proposed by Count Zinzendorf and his friends in Pennsylvania at that time. In the first and last of these publications he represents himself as former preacher in the three principal churches of Berne, in Switzerland. Guldin was possessed of a considerable estate. Besides his Roxborough property, he owned land in Oley, and personal property as well. He has been heretofore regarded as one of the original settlers of Oley, a fertile region in the present Berks county, but recent investigation indicates that he never lived there, and that his son of the same name was the Oley pioneer. The Rev. Samuel Guldin died in Philadelphia on the last day of the year 1745, aged eighty-five. He left a curious paper intended for his last will and testament, a medley of business directions and pious admonitions, a mixture of English and German and Latin. His purpose was to dispose judiciously of his considerable means, remembering old friends, designating laudable benevolent interests, and caring appropriately for his immediate family. But the paper having not been executed was inoperative.

Thus we see there was a steady, although small, stream of incoming colonists of the Reformed faith, who located in and about Germantown in the earlier years of the Province. The great rush of the Palatines came later. What opportunities had these primitive settlers to worship after

the manner of their fathers in Germany, Holland, Switzerland, and France? Prior to 1710 we know of no clergymen of their faith in the Province. It may be, however, that upon occasion one or another of the Reformed dominies at Manhattan Island penetrated southward through the wilderness—such is, and always has been, the indomitable missionary spirit of the Holland Church—to bring the Word to his fellow Christians at Germantown. If any did, there was an open door for him here. There was built as early as 1686 a house of worship for the common use of the people. Pastorius, in one of his letters to Europe, says: "Wir haben allhier zu Germantown Ann. 1686 ein Kirchlein für die Gemeinde gebauet"—We built here in Germantown in the year 1686 a small church for the community. It was built for the Gemeinde—the community. Gemeinde, it is true, is in America usually understood to mean a religious society or congregation. But in Germany the word means primarily a political district, comprising in its limits a State church. A Gemeinde there comprehends all the inhabitants of the district, irrespective of their church connection. The government of Germantown was set up, by special permission of Penn, upon the lines then and still in vogue in the villages, or dorfs, of Germany. So it happened that Pastorius caused the erection of a Kirchlein für die Gemeinde—a small church not for any particular denomination, there being no State church in Pennsylvania, but for the use of the community in general.

In the course of time the Reformed people of Germantown crystallized into a congregation. On the 20th of May, in the year of Our Lord Jesus Christ 1710, says a cotemporary record, Mr. Paulus Van Vlecq was installed pastor of the Church of Jesus Christ at Shamminie, Bensalem, and Jermantown, and the neighboring villages. A congregation was organized by this minister, to meet the needs of the Germantown people, on the 4th of June, 1710, under the name of the Whitemarsh church, with Hans Hendrick Meels as senior elder, Evert Ten Heuven junior elder, and Isaac Dilbeck senior deacon. On the 25th of December, 1710, the officers installed were: Evert Ten Heuven, senior elder; Isaac Dilbeck, junior elder; William Dewees, senior deacon; and Jan Aweeg, junior deacon. On the same day, Christmas, 1710, Sibes Bartels and Marytje Hendricks his wife, and Kasper Staels, were admitted to membership upon profession of faith. The recorded members of the congregation in 1711 were: Hans Hendrick Meels, Isaac Dilbeck, Jan Aweeg, Antonie Geert Yerkes, Geertruij Reinbergh, Marritje Blomerse, wife of Isaac Dilbeck, Catrina (Christina?) Meels, wife of William Dewees, Annchen Barents, wife of J. Pieterse, Maria Selle, wife of Gerret Ten Heuven, Evert Ten Heuven, Johannis Jodden, Johannis Revenstock, Geertrui Aweeg, Elizabeth Schipbouwer, wife of Evert Ten Heuven, Elsje Schol, Sibillae Revenstock, wife of Hendrick Tibben, Margaret Bon, wife of Kasper Staels. Pastor Van Vlecq's ministry apparently ended here in 1712.

About the year 1720, John Philip Bœhm, a parochial schoolmaster, then just arrived from the Palatinate of the Rhine, began to hold religious meetings among the Reformed settlers at Whitemarsh and elsewhere. On the 23rd of December, 1725, he administered the communion to twenty-four persons of the congregation which he had previously organized at the house of William Dewees, who then lived in the Crefeld district, on the Wissahickon. This congregation maintained an existence until 1745.

In 1727, George Michael Weiss, a regularly ordained Reformed minister, a graduate from Heidelberg, was chosen pastor of the Reformed congregation then organized in Philadelphia. About the same time he was placed over the High Dutch church at Germantown. On the 24th of November, 1729, he was more specifically placed in charge of the Philadelphia and Germantown congregations by the ministers of the Dutch Reformed Church of New York city. Pastor Weiss then and there declared his desire to become subordinate to the Classis of Amsterdam, and promised to endeavor to bring his Germantown and Philadelphia congregations into similar relations. At the same meeting the New York ministers engaged to urge the Amsterdam Classis to send over whatever moneys had been collected in Europe in behalf of the congregations of Mr. Weiss at Germantown and Philadelphia.

Weiss went to Holland the following Spring in quest of funds for the churches, but when he returned to America he did not resume the pastorate at Germantown and Philadelphia, but preached in the Province of New York for some years, and then came back to Pennsylvania, engaging in pastoral labors in the interior.

JOHN BECHTEL.

In 1726, John Bechtel, a native of Weinheim, about twenty miles north of Heidelberg, came to Germantown. "Reared in the German Reformed Church, and being an earnest, pious man, two years after he settled in Germantown," according to John W. Jordan, of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, "he began to hold religious meetings for his Reformed brethren in the town, and was instrumental in doing much good prior to the arrival of Schlatter and the organization of a Synod. At first he kept these meetings in his own house, not only on Sundays, but every morning and evening on week-days. The congregation which he gathered built a small church on Market Square, and in 1733 he was given a call as pastor, and a license to preach was sent him from Heidelberg University. * * * He was not ordained, however, until April 18, 1742, and then by Bishop Nitschman of the Moravian Church." What place of worship the Reformed people of Germantown had prior to the building of the church referred to by Mr. Jordan is not at present clear. The painstaking and exceedingly thorough editors of the English edition of the Halle Reports—Rev. Dr. Schmucker and Rev. Dr. Mann—say the corner-

stone of a Reformed church was laid here in 1719 by the Swedish pastor. However this may be, as late as January 9, 1733, in a list of church edifices in Germantown reported by Arent Hassert, Jr., a native of Holland, but long a resident of Philadelphia, no mention is made of a Reformed church. He wrote: Germantown is six English miles from Philadelphia. It has a large Quaker meeting house (the name by which the Quaker churches are called), a High German Mennonite church, and a similar one in which the Crefeld or broken Hollandish is used. Hassert's report was made at the request of the Synods of South and North Holland and is preserved at The Hague.

We come now to the first purchase of land on Market Square for a church. It was a lot containing one-eighth of an acre of ground. It was conveyed on the 8th of November, 1732, by Henry Frederick, of Germantown, carpenter, and Anna Barbara, his wife, to John Bechtel, turner, Christopher Meng, mason, Jacob Bauman, carpenter, and George Bensel, yeoman, in trust for the Reformed congregation. In the trust deed made by these persons, on the 9th of November, 1732, it is recited that "said land and premises were so as aforesaid conveyed unto us by the direction and appointment of the inhabitants of Germantown aforesaid belonging to the High Dutch Reformed Congregation . . . in Trust to the intent only that we, or such or so many of us as shall be and continue in unity and religious fellowship with the said High Dutch Reformed congregation, and remain members of the same . . . shall hold it for the benefit, use and behoof of the said congregation forever and for a place to erect a meeting house for the use and service of the said congregation." The description of the lot was as follows: Beginning at a stone set for a corner (by the Germantown Market Place), being also a corner of Nicholas Delaplaine's land, thence by the same northeast eight perches and four foot to a stone set for a corner, thence southeast two perches and seven foot to a stone set for a corner by land late of John Midwinter, thence by the same southwest eight perches and four foot to a stone set for a corner by the said Market Place, thence by the same northwest two perches and seven foot, to the place of beginning.

The land purchased was part of lot No. 10, on the main street in the original plan of the town. On the 18th of Sixth month (August), 1689, Francis Daniel Pastorius, partner and attorney of the Frankfort Company, deeded fifty acres to Dirk op den Kolck, in compensation for work done in Germantown under a contract March 23rd, 1685, for Thomas Von Willich and Johannes le Brun, partners in said company. By the terms of this contract Op den Kolck was to work for his employers one day of each week for the period of four years. Op den Kolck, by deed poll dated and acknowledged the 6th of Third month, 1691, transferred this tract of fifty acres to James de la Plaine. It is described as bounded along the Mill street and Wolter Simon's land on the one side and with

the lot of Wigart Levering on the other side. On the 6th of Eleventh month (January), 170$\frac{3}{4}$, James Delaplaine sold to the Bailiff, Burgess and Commonalty of Germantown, one-half acre for a market place. It had a front of fourteen perches on the main street, and a depth of five and three-quarters perches. May 30, 1723, James Delaplaine and Hannah, his wife, conveyed seventeen and a quarter acres of his land, part of the fifty acres, to John Midwinter. April 26, 1727, John Midwinter and Sarah, his wife, granted to Henry Frederick a half quarter of an acre, part of the seventeen and a quarter acres. This one-half quarter acre, we have seen, was purchased for the Reformed congregation in 1732.

The following year, 1733, a house of worship was erected upon the lot. It was well built of stone, and of good capacity. Rev. John Philip Bœhm, in a communication addressed to the Holland Church authorities, in 1739, describes it as "Eine wohlgebaute, ziemlich grosse Kirch, von Steinen."

In 1733, Rev. John Bartholomew Rieger preached in Germantown. We do not understand that John Bechtel had any relations with the congregation at this time other than as lay member and voluntary leader of meetings of its members. Under date of March 4, 1733, (unless this is 173$\frac{3}{4}$, it must have been before the new church was built) the consistory of the Philadelphia Reformed congregation wrote a letter to Holland, in which is this statement: The Skippack, Germantown and Philadelphia congregations have a minister—Bartholomew Rieger—who came a year and a half ago to take the place of Dominie Weiss. He preaches on one Sunday at Skippack, the second at Germantown, and the third at Philadelphia. Mr. Bartholomew also attached his signature to his letter thus:

Joh : Barth : Rieger, Verbi divini
Minister Eccles: ad V. D. Reformatorium
quix Christo Philadelph : Germantown :
et Colliguntur.

In 1734, the year following the construction of the church, the congregation numbered thirty members. So Mr. Bœhm advised Holland, on the authority of figures received from two of the elders, Meng and Bensel. In October of the same year Bœhm characterizes Germantown as a place possessing many advantages—"een seer voordelige plaats." It appears that Rieger had now left Philadelphia and Germantown. In the same letter, upon request, Pastor Bœhm points out to the Synod of South and North Holland how four additional pastors could be usefully placed in Pennsylvania. Among his suggestions was this: One minister to take charge of the Philadelphia and Germantown congregations, and in connection with the latter the Whitemarsh congregation could be served, as it was but four English miles away.

It may be proper to explain at this point the reason for the activity of Rev. Mr. Bœhm in the affairs of the Germantown congregation of

which he was not, and had not been, so far as we are advised, at any time pastor. From the year 1729 the Reformed churches of Pennsylvania generally, few in number it is true, were subordinate to the Holland Church authorities. A year or two before this date the Synods of South and North Holland began to contribute money for the sustentation and advancement of these Pennsylvania congregations. The Hollanders were able and eager to supply the men and the money necessary for the upbuilding of the Church. They went about this matter in a methodical way. Their first step was to find out where the congregations were, what others could be judiciously organized, and how much money each would undertake to contribute for the support of its pastor. The Hollanders tried several means to obtain the required information, but without success. They then applied to Mr. Bœhm for help in this respect. He had been here for about ten years, was well acquainted with the condition of affairs, and proceeded energetically to supply detailed statistics and facts. When sufficiently informed they sent over the needed ministers, Bibles, books for parochial schools, and money to build churches and pay schoolmasters. In 1793 these relations between the Holland and Pennsylvania churches ceased. A great debt of gratitude is due to noble Holland—an obligation hardly acknowledged—for its unstinted liberality to the Pennsylvania Reformed congregations for a period of nearly sixty-five years.

An idea of the confused state of the affairs of the Market Square church in 1738 may be gathered from the advices sent from Pennsylvania March 1, 1738, by Rev. Mr. Dorsius, sent from Holland for the special purpose of examining and reporting upon the state of the several Pennsylvania churches, who wrote: At Germantown, six English miles distant from Philadelphia, is a fine church but a miserable minister, a Quaker-inclined weaver, who performs all the work of a minister there, although not authorized to do so. (Tot Germantown . . . is well een fraai kerk maar een ellendingen leeraar, een quaker-gezinden wever die daar alle het werk van eenen leeraar verrigt zonder daartoe geregtigt te zyn.)

A glimpse of the condition of the congregation in 1740 was obtained by me in the Church archives at The Hague, in a report made, at the request of the Holland church people for a statement of the sum the congregation felt able to pay towards a pastor's salary. The response to the inquiry was, translated from the German, as follows:

Owing to dissensions caused by all kinds of sectarian persons the Germantown church is in a very pitiable condition. However, if the Germantown and Whitemarsh congregations can be united, Ten Pounds Pennsylvania money can be collected annually for a pastor's salary. Signed as members of the congregation, by

JACOB BAUMANN,
Germandon, 18th March, 1740. JOHANN NICKLAUS RAUSCH.

The year 1742 was the most turbulent in the annals of Market Square church. On the 24th of November, 1741, Count Zinzendorf came to

Philadelphia, having as one of his purposes a scheme to unite the leading men of the several denominations in Pennsylvania, especially the Germans, for evangelical work. John Bechtel at once entered heartily into the movement. Henry Antes, a prominent Reformed churchman, issued a call for the first meeting in furtherance of this object to be held in Germantown on New Year's Day, 1742. Market Square Reformed church was now the storm centre. John Philip Bœhm, who appears to have at this time been nominal pastor here, in connection with his pastorate of Philadelphia and other congregations, vehemently opposed the project of the Count from the outset. But Bechtel and those of his way of thinking were in control. On the 31st of December, 1741, the Count was invited to preach in the church, and he did so. But of course contrary to the wishes of Bœhm. The fifth conference of the representatives of the Zinzendorfian movement was held, April 17–20, 1742, in this church. On Sunday, April 18, 1742, Bishop Nitschman consecrated Bechtel to the office of inspector, overseer, and teacher, over the Reformed preachers in Pennsylvania. [Fresenius Nachrichten, Dritter Band, Frankfurt und Leipzig, 1748, p. 183.] On the second day of Easter, the same year, according to Bœhm, Bechtel arranged to administer the communion to the members of the church, and some accepted it from him. Count Zinzendorf came to Germantown on New Year's eve (December 31, 1742), and preached in the Reformed church. Nine days later he sailed from New York for Europe. In the course of the year 1742, the aims of the Count and his friends were greatly modified. The establishment of the Moravian Church in Pennsylvania was the outcome of their efforts. Mr. Bechtel's connection with the Reformed Church of Germantown terminated in 1744. In 1746 he removed to Bethlehem, and there performed responsible duties for the Moravians. Mr. Bœhm's influence at Germantown now became stronger. The congregation now accepted the ordinances of the Holland Church, which under Mr. Bechtel's ministrations it had refused to do.

A graphic recital of doings at our first Market Square church during its early years is given in another manuscript preserved in the archives at The Hague. It was forwarded to the Holland Church Fathers by John Philip Bœhm in 1744. Its writer had strong prejudices, for which allowance must be made. Divested of its sharp strictures on Bœhm's opponents, the narrative runs substantially as follows:

As to the congregation at Germantown: It is true, they built a handsome stone church, many years ago, for which they are still considerably in debt; but against our admonitions, warnings and protestations they have continually permitted the believers of all kinds of erroneous views to become associated with them. Bartholomew Rieger, while pastor at Philadelphia, preached for them a short time. When he left them they permitted John Bechtel to preach regularly in their church. So also did

the aged Samuel Gulden, who according to his own printed writings was formerly minister of the three principal churches of Berne in Switzerland, but on account of his Pietism was forced to leave, and then came to this country. At this time he resides in Germantown and much of the time he preaches in their church. At the same time they allow a sectarian crowd to assemble therein every Sunday afternoon. Among these people is one of the Inspired, another a Pietist, a Separatist—persons of all the denominations known here. These meet in the church, select a subject from the Bible, and then discuss it. The public calls these persons disputants; but they call themselves the free assembly. At other times they allowed Count Zinzendorf and his Moravians to occupy the church and the Count to preach therein. And John Bechtel, the turner, was one of the Count's most willing lieutenants. But because the Count became involved in a difficulty with the Separatists, who pressed him too hard, he turned the congregation at Germantown over to his brother, the said John Bechtel, took his departure, and went to Philadelphia.

Now the unthinking people allowed themselves to be led captive by Bechtel. He promised in future to teach faithfully the Reformed doctrines by conforming to the Heidelberg catechism in every respect. With this understanding they engaged him on the 27th of January, 1743, to be their minister for the term of one year, making a written contract. But scarcely a week elapsed before he requested the four chosen wardens of the congregation to subscribe to a letter omitting the 80th and the 114th questions* from the Heidelberg Catechism. Asked why? he replied: The 80th question is not needed in this country, and the 114th (said he) was not true, because those who had become converted to God cease to commit sins, and can not only keep the commandments of God, but that it was very easy for them to do so. Whereupon the greater part of the congregation became dissatisfied; but as they had made a written agreement they had to submit until the expiration of the year. In the course of the year a gallery was built in the church, and an organ was purchased for sixty pounds and placed in the gallery. At the end of the year which the contract covered, on the 27th of January, 1744, the membership again became masters and Bechtel was discharged, and he left the church; but for the expense of building the gallery and for the cost of the organ they are responsible, and the sums paid on account or contributed for the purpose they must restore. How this can be done I cannot figure out.

But as these people are of steadfast disposition and can be relied upon, and with a view to bringing the congregation under the rules of the church, it was worth while to offer them a helping hand. But up to this time they have not made a request to come under our rules.

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*The 80th question is: What difference is there between the Lord's Supper and the Popish mass? The 114th question is: But can those that are converted to God perfectly keep these (the Ten) commands?

For when they had been released by Bechtel, and almost all the neighboring Reformed people, from far and wide, came the Sunday thereafter (the most of the members of Whitemarsh being also present) to take counsel with each other as to placing the congregation in good condition, (William de Weese, the Whitemarsh elder, testifies to this) there was not a single member present who did not vote to call me to Germantown to become the regular minister there, in conjunction with the Whitemarsh congregation. But as one must be circumspect when dealing with such people, it so happened, on the 20th February last (1744), when passing the house of a man named Meng at Germantown, I stopped to speak to him concerning these things. I informed him that I was very glad that the matter had finally been brought so far. And that if the people would come under the ordinances, and into Christian fellowship with the Whitemarsh congregation, whose regular minister of God's Word I was, I was heartily willing to undertake to serve them. I desired a written declaration to this effect. Meng replied: That shall be done. But they have not done so. It appears one man who has arbitrary power is opposed to coming under the ordinances. This member of the congregation upon his own responsibility, on the 11th of March, allowed a wandering minister, named Slotemaker, from Raritan, to preach in the church. And this was done without consulting the four elected elders. This information I have from one of them.

This act I regard as no better than was the taking of Bechtel. The more so because Bechtel on a Sunday in the latter part of the year of his service preached in the morning and announced that in the afternoon Slotemaker, who was then present, would preach. And this came to pass. From this one may judge that Bechtel and Slotemaker are of the same character and that they play into each other's hands.

A word as to the severe comments in this communication. Bœhm, its author, had been ordained to the ministry by the Reformed clergymen in New York by authority from Holland, and he had brought the Pennsylvania congregations, as far as he was able to do so, under the rules governing the Holland Church. He looked to Amsterdam for inspiration in matters of doctrine and for guidance in matters of government. He had organized congregations in the various sections of the Province settled by Reformed colonists. This was a difficult task, requiring many long journeys on horseback into the inland wilderness. His strong, rugged character was suited for this work in those rude times. He was a rigid observer of the letter of the law of the Church, and he insisted upon entire obedience from the congregations to that law. His combative disposition not unfrequently brought him into collision with individuals both of his own and of other denominations. The announcement of the Zinzendorfian movement was the signal for instant resistance from him. He saw in its success the probable disruption of the Pennsylvania Reformed church

organizations. Accordingly he exhorted the membership to shun it. Such of them as disregarded his warnings, one of whom was Bechtel, he pursued with severest censure. He issued two pamphlets, couched in strong language, in opposition to the unity movement. His vigorous exertions saved the Reformed Church from disintegration.

Bechtel was a man of quite different disposition. He was meek, averse to strife, obedient to the spirit rather than the letter of the law of the Church. He leaned to the Swiss view of Reformed Church doctrine. He did not make submission to the rules for church government prescribed by the Holland authorities; nor was he ever a beneficiary of Holland's largess. When Zinzendorf came upon the scene, Bechtel hastened to his standard. In the movement for unity of Christ's followers, he saw the realization of his heart's desire. Doctrine concerned him little. His main endeavor was to find the footsteps of the Redeemer that he might walk therein. When Bœhm was inveighing in his pamphlets, Bechtel was calmly compiling a catechism. Bechtel's work was limited to the Germantown congregation. He followed the trade of turner, and was in comfortable circumstances. In all probability he received no compensation for his religious labors. If we read the character of the man aright, his sense of duty as a follower and lover of Jesus would have recoiled from accepting pay for doing the Master's work.

Let us not misjudge these two unlike men. Both are deserving of honor. Bœhm stands forth as the zealous founder and preserver of the Reformed Church in Pennsylvania. Bechtel comes down to us as a guileless teacher of the Word, who longed and prayed and worked for the salvation of men.

And now let us turn to a few more items of interest touching the Market Square Church, gleaned from the manuscripts in the archives at Rotterdam and The Hague. A letter dated 14th July, 1744, from the members of the German Reformed congregation of Germantown, addressed to the deputies of the Synods of South and North Holland, was signed by

Niklaus Achs, Eltester
Fritrich Görtner, Eltester
Jacob Bauman
Christoph Meng
George Bensel
Daniel Kröninger
Jacob Kunff (?)
Jacob Weidman
Bastian Müller
Adam Müller
Fridrich Lorentz
Conrad Weydner
Hanes Büber
Henrich Bard
Johannes Von Sanden
Jacob Madöri
Johann Georg Riess
Jacob Maag

This letter was received and read at the Synod of South Holland, held at Gouda, July 6–16, 1745.

In 1745, the Germantown congregation received some additions to its

membership from a nearby source, as explained by a letter written by Rev. Mr. Bœhm to the Holland supporters of the Pennsylvania churches. His words are: The Whitemarsh congregation, which at all times consisted of but few members, has, through the death of the aged, faithful elder, William Dewees, come to a standstill (because his house was at all times our church, but since his death it can be so no longer, nor is there opportunity at hand to worship elsewhere, much less the means to build a church). The lower portion of the membership has gone to Germantown, which will serve to strengthen that congregation somewhat.

In 1746, Rev. Michael Schlatter, a Swiss Reformed minister, was sent by the Holland Synods to Pennsylvania to supervise the churches here. He assumed the pastorate of Philadelphia in connection with his duties as superintendent. He wrote letters from Philadelphia dated September 28, and October 3, 1746, which were read at the meeting of the Synod of South Holland held at Gorichem July 4–14, 1747, in which he stated that he had preached at Germantown, and that in this congregation fifty-five men had subscribed the sum of £24 Pennsylvania money. He advised making one charge of the Philadelphia and Germantown churches, with one service in each every Sunday. The congregation was in good condition. When it was further canvassed, eighty-two male members, whose names are in the Holland archives, subscribed £34 towards maintaining a pastor. A few of the principal subscribers were: Sebastian Miller, deacon, £1 5 0; Nicholas Rebein, £1; Nicol Rausch, £1; Joh. Georg Ries, £1; Jac. Bauman, elder, £1; Paulus Geisel, £1; Christian Geisler, £1; Christoff Meng, elder, £1.

In 1747, in pursuance of his mission to introduce order among the Reformed churches, Schlatter organized a Cœtus, or Synod, subject to the Holland Church government. At the initial meeting of the Cœtus, held in Philadelphia September 29, 1747, the Germantown congregation was represented by Michael Schlatter, V. D. M., and Christophel Meng and Paulus Geisel, elders. At the second Cœtus, a year later, Mr. Schlatter was still pastor of Germantown, in connection with the Philadelphia congregation.

In 1752 a letter from Germantown congregation, dated 5th 9bris, and sent to Holland, was signed by these members:

Christoph Meng
Paul Geissel
Nicholas Rehbein
Johann Georg Ries
Johannes Zacharias
Henrich Schellenberg
Jacob Calman
Sebastian Müller
Johan Conrat Schutz
Wilhelm Hoffman
Melcher Meng

In the church books of the Race Street Reformed church is recorded a contract with Rev. William Stoy to preach for that congregation from July 1, 1756, to July 1, 1757, for a stipulated sum. There is in this instrument a postscript as follows:

P. S. Hierbey ist austrücklich vorbehalten das weilen Hr. Pfarr Stoy allen vierzehen Tag eine Predigt auf den Sontag in Germenton thun soll, der obstehende accord doch in allen Claŭsŭle (clauses?) was das Salarium angehet veststehen und bleiben soll.

P. S. It is expressly reserved that although Rev. Mr. Stoy is to preach a sermon on Sunday every fortnight, in Germantown, the foregoing agreement shall remain in force in all its clauses touching the salary.

In 1762 the church was renovated and enlarged. The rear end was taken out and an addition built which doubled its former capacity. We hear in connection with this improvement of a steeple on the church. In this steeple, we are told by the late Townsend Ward, a faithful historian, hung the historic bell, cast in 1725, bearing the words: "Gott allein die Ehre"—to God alone the glory.

In 1771 the congregation was chartered by the Proprietaries, under the name of "The Minister, Trustees, Elders and Deacons of the German Reformed Congregation in Germantown." The names mentioned in the articles of incorporation are: "Christian Frederick Fœring, the present minister, Christopher Meng, Ulrich Zollinger, John Moore and John Bockeus, the present trustees; Jacob Weidman, John Unruh, John Dedier and Godfrey Bockius, the present elders; Peter Smith, George Walter, Jacob Hoffman and Jacob Ritter, the present deacons." These incorporators are required to apply the income to the maintenance and support of the ministers and officers of the said congregation, and their churchyards or burying grounds, and other houses which do now or hereafter shall belong to the said congregation, and for erecting a parsonage and supporting one church more and a school house in said town."

May 10, 1794, Christopher Ottinger, on behalf of the congregation, bought two and a quarter acres, fronting on Germantown road.

This ancient church has played a patriotic part in our national history. Mr. Ward, already quoted, says: "In the battle of Germantown a battalion of Virginians, under Colonel Matthews, having been taken prisoners, were lodged in the church." Watson says: "The church was where, during the fever of 1793, Washington regularly worshipped, as often as there was English preaching, a service performed occasionally by Dr. Smith, from the Falls of Schuylkill."

A succession of distinguished divines—at least seventeen in number—proclaimed the Gospel of Christ from the Market Square pulpit, during the hundred years from the coming of Schlatter in 1746 to the pastorate of Rev. Jacob Helfenstein. This is the honored roll: Michael Schlatter, Conrad Steiner, William Stoy, John George Alsentz, F. C. Faber, C. Frederick Fœring, J. C. Albertus Helffenstein, Samuel Debendorff, J. C. Albertus Helffenstein, a second time; Frederick Herman, William Runkel,

Charles Helffenstein, Frederick van der Sloot, Casper Wack, John H. Smaltz Albert Helffenstein, Jr., Truman Osborn, Jacob Helfenstein.

During the pastorate of Reverend Jacob Helfenstein a radical change took place; the congregation's old affiliations ceased, and the church took a new departure. Mr. Helfenstein dissented from certain phases of the doctrines taught in the Theological Seminary of the Reformed Church. On the 27th of March, 1853, he preached a sermon, entitled A Perverted Gospel, which was a forceful presentation of some of the points at issue. By degrees the ties which bound Market Square church to the Reformed Synod weakened more and more. The congregation sympathized with their pastor. The statistics of the Classis of Philadelphia of the Reformed Church show that in 1850 the congregation had a communicant membership of 425 and two Sabbath schools. In 1853, 445 communicant members were reported. The two succeeding years, 1854 and 1855, no report was made. In 1856 the name of the Germantown church and of its Pastor, Helfenstein, disappeared from the records of the Reformed Church. A union was effected about this time between this congregation and the Presbyterian Church, which continues to the present time.

This is the history in brief of the Reformed Church of Germantown. It is, in other words, the story of the genesis of the Market Square Presbyterian congregation. The career of the old church has been marked, as we have seen, by sharp contentions, heroic labors, disheartening failures, blessed triumphs. Could the worthies of the former times be with us this day, they would with one accord give thanks to the Almighty for the outcome of their unsuccessful and successful efforts. For be it ever borne in remembrance, what they did, one and all, whether in hot controversy or in gentle ministration, was done in the firm faith of its righteousness and was meant for the glory of God. Their work has yielded a noble fruitage.

What marvelous changes Time has wrought! Look around. The prosaic market square of the olden time, once the site of the prison, the stocks and the pound, is now dedicated to patriotism and art, crowned by an ornate monument to the memory of the valorous great-great-great-grandsons of the primitive settlers. Where stood the humble meeting house of 1733, albeit of stone and fine for its day, this spacious temple of worship, replete with modern appointments, now rears its beauteous front, a striking example of present-day ecclesiastical architecture.

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